CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SIXTY-FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 29 May 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mrs. Diallo (Senegal)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 765th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to make an introductory statement. It is a great honour for me to take up the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament on behalf of the Republic of Senegal. I would like to assure you that I will spare no effort to discharge the duties of the presidency during this difficult period which the Conference on Disarmament is going through. First of all I would like to express my profound gratitude to my predecessor, Ambassador Grigori Berdennikov of the Russian Federation, for the efforts and talent he displayed during his term of office. I would also like to tell him again how much I enjoyed my stay in his country as the Ambassador of Senegal. I am also grateful to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, as well as the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, and all the members of the secretariat for the wise and essential assistance which they are sure to give me.

The Conference on Disarmament is passing through a crucial period in its existence, and at present is in an uncertain situation in which the spirit of consensus that has always helped it to overcome obstacles which at first sight might seem insurmountable seems to have been overshadowed by the prevalence of suspicion in which the slightest proposal made by any country or group of countries is immediately questionable. I think this is especially regrettable because some countries such as mine, which have just been admitted as full-fledged members, intended to participate fully in the work of this body, which represented in their eyes the vigour and effectiveness which multilateral diplomacy should display. This participation in the work of the international community's sole multilateral negotiating body seemed to us to be all the more exciting because the Conference had achieved undeniable successes by negotiating and drawing up treaties and conventions which guaranteed still better the future of coming generations. I will simply recall the most recent ones - the Convention on Chemical Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

Given those successes, we viewed the future as promising and we hoped that the Conference was not going to stop when it was doing so well but would continue to forge ahead and tackle the other important issues which had been before it since it was created, in the area of both nuclear and conventional arms, including anti-personnel landmines. Unfortunately, and we deeply regret this, the Conference on Disarmament seems to have become bogged down since the opening of this session in sterile considerations which have little to do with this body's wholly justified solid reputation of effectiveness and seriousness. Perhaps all of this, is, after all, just a tricky patch following the intensive efforts made last year to complete the draft comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. We would venture to hope today that reason will prevail and that the Conference, thanks to its usual wisdom, will find a dynamic consensus in order finally to adopt a programme of work duly taking into account the interests of all sides, the climate and political realities of the post-cold-war period.

(The President)

I would be particularly reassured by such a development because I represent a country, Senegal, which is known for its spirit of peace and dialogue, a country which is a party to all the treaties and all the conventions drawn up in the area of disarmament; a country which gives priority to establishing brotherly and mutually beneficial relations with all States in its subregion and its continent, Africa, a country which has no intention, either today or tomorrow, of acquiring weapons of mass destruction; a country whose leaders consider that all the wealth swallowed up in research and development or the acquisition of such weapons would be better applied to development and the welfare of mankind as a whole. This is why Senegal, through its head of State, President Abdou Diouf, never lets slip an opportunity to praise the merits of the "peace dividend". This is also why Senegal welcomed the signature in Cairo, Egypt, of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. In the same context allow me here to commend South Africa, which unilaterally decided to divest itself of nuclear weapons. Finally, this is why Senegal joined 27 other countries of the G.21 to draw up a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons (CD/1419) and remains in favour of establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament within this Conference. We believe that the establishment of such a committee would not in any way prejudice the praiseworthy efforts undertaken by the nuclear Powers to reduce their nuclear arsenals. We welcome those efforts and urge their continuation. But we are not convinced that negotiations in the area of nuclear weapons should remain exclusively in the purview of the nuclear-weapon States. The involvement of the international community is essential because transparency and confidence are essential in such a sensitive area.

Another issue of particular interest to Senegal is that of anti-personnel landmines. We will not elaborate on the ravages wrought in our continent and elsewhere in the world by this veritable scourge. My country is participating in the Ottawa Process and we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Canadian Government for its welcome initiative. We consider that the Conference on Disarmament, for its part, could find appropriate machinery to study this question. As far as Senegal is concerned, we will join any consensus on this matter, as we will also join consensus on the way to deal with the other items on the agenda of the Conference. But what my country could not accept is that the Conference should try to ignore the question of nuclear disarmament, whose importance no longer needs demonstrating. Interesting proposals have been made in the Conference for a fair and equitable compromise on a balanced programme of work from which all members of the Conference could benefit. I hope that reason and wisdom will prevail to preserve and strengthen the Conference's credibility and enable it to achieve the breakthroughs which the international community expects of it.

On the speakers' list for today I have the representative of Sudan, Ambassador Sahlool. I give him the floor.

Mr. SAHLOOL (Sudan): Permit me at the outset to express the gratitude and appreciation of my delegation to address the Conference on Disarmanent on an item which is of great concern to my country.

(Mr. Sahlool, Sudan)

The Sudan has had to endure the ravages of a civil war since 1955, and although some major steps have recently been taken to achieve a final settlement of the conflict, by the signing of a peace agreement with seven rebel factions only last month, there is a lot to be undertaken before a final peaceful settlement is achieved. However, the Sudan has to deal with a more urgent problem, namely, the resettlement of the displaced persons in the areas under government control. The major impediment to the implementation of the resettlement programme and the rehabilitation efforts is the clearance of the mines which have been extensively planted in the conflict-affected areas by the warring factions during the civil war.

The Sudan ranks third after Angola and Mozambique in suffering from the scourge of landmines in the African continent. It has initiated a demining campaign, and is therefore keen to solicit international assistance for its mine clearance activities. In this respect, I am happy to report that a number of donors, including some in the United States, have pledged support for the demining activities, which we hope should commence where hostilities have ceased definitively. Talks have commenced between the Government of the Sudan and the Mine Clearance and Policy Unit (MCPU) of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). However, and as with all DHA-supported programmes, the capacity to implement is dependent on support from the international donor community. The Sudan therefore calls upon the international community to give the MCPU of the DHA every possible assistance to enhance its capacity to be able to monitor the prohibition of landmines in all international conflicts.

We believe that this Conference should be instrumental in keeping the international debate on a global ban on landmines on track, and it is encouraging to note that the problem of anti-personnel landmines is on the agenda of this session. In this respect, the Sudan welcomes the proposal to establish an ad hoc committee on a "ban on anti-personnel landmines" and pledges its cooperation in negotiating an effective, legally binding international agreement to this end. The Sudan is also ready and willing to participate in the preparatory meetings leading to the forthcoming Ottawa Conference, which will hopefully commit those countries which have expressed their readiness to accept some constraints on the kind of landmine that can be used or sold, taking into consideration paragraphs 69 and 70 of the section on "Disarmament and international security" of the Final Document adopted at the Twelfth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held in New Delhi on 7 and 8 April 1997. We are happy to note that the United Kingdom, under its new Administration, is ready to join the ranks of these countries, and hope that other major Powers will follow this commendable example.

We hope that, in time, an agreement which may be concluded at this juncture will become a truly global arrangement enabling the international community to verify those countries which persist in providing the parties to the various conflicts with the financial and technical means to secure and plant mines, and apply all means of pressure at its disposal to persuade them to desist from producing and providing the mines. We believe that the

(Mr. Sahlool, Sudan)

Conference should give this problem top priority in its agenda, and should not be deflected from pursuing this course by any other priorities, since it is of prime importance to many countries in Africa, and could contribute significantly to their stability and peaceful development.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the Sudan for his statement. Would any other delegations like to speak at this stage? I give the floor to the Ambassador of Turkey.

Mr. ULUCEVIK (Turkey): Thank you very much, Madam President, for giving me the floor. Since it is not my intention this morning to speak on the substance of the subjects on our agenda, I venture to reserve my words of congratulation upon your assumption of the presidency of the CD for a later stage of our work when I address the substantive issues.

If you will allow me, I shall dwell on a first-ever event in the history of the United Nations which occurred last week with a direct bearing on the conduct of the CD's business in safety and without hindrance, as well as on the safety and safe movement, within the United Nations premises in Geneva of the members of the delegations to the CD, together with those of staff of the secretariat.

A week ago today, on 22 May, as we were sitting in this very chamber for a formal plenary meeting, at around 11 a.m., some 200 persons or more, brandishing banners belonging to the PKK terrorists, broke into the Palais des Nations and forced their way into the first floor of the main building, smashing glass doors at door 4. They came as close as within 40 or 50 metres of the Salle du Conseil. They occupied the United Nations premises for about five hours. In the course of the episode, the intruders burned the flags of two United Nations Member States who are, at the same time, members of the CD.

Despite the indisputable fact that their abhorrent actions constituted an offence in the form of violation of United Nations property and established rules, with regard to the inviolability of international premises and the security of United Nations personnel and diplomats, the demonstrators were able to perpetrate their attack with impunity. As announced later by the United Nations Geneva Office, the demonstrators were escorted by United Nations security personnel and Swiss police out of the United Nations premises.

Up until this moment we have not yet heard anything from any relevant authority, international or local, as to what legal action has been initiated against those who have actually committed an outright offence, to say the least, by forcibly breaking into the United Nations premises and occupying them for several hours.

Following the despicable event, the United Nations Geneva Office issued a statement expressing satisfaction that the work of the United Nations was not affected, and that the staff continued to fulfil their duties.

(Mr. Uluçevik, Turkey)

Yet I, in my capacity as Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey, both to the United Nations Geneva Office and to the Disarmament Conference, was rendered unable to fulfil my duties in the CD on that particular day because of the incident.

We, in Turkey, say that there is always a good in every evil. As a matter of fact, the ominous event of last week has brought to the light of day the fact that there is an urgent need for the implementation of effective security measures for the protection of the inviolability of the United Nations Geneva Office's premises, where the CD is also seated, and to ensure the safety of the United Nations personnel, as well as that of diplomats of Member States of the United Nations and the CD.

Therefore, Madam President, in the light of last week's event, I request you to convey to the distinguished Director-General of the United Nations Geneva Office and, through him, to the authorities of the host country, our concern about the security situation in and around the United Nations Geneva Office premises, together with our request that adequate effective measures be taken to ensure the inviolability of the United Nations Geneva Office and other United Nations specialized agencies' premises, as well as the safety of the representatives of the Member States and United Nations personnel.

I entertain the hope that, as a result of prompt action to reinforce the security measures, anything in the nature of last week's event will not recur in the future.

Any delay in taking necessary preventive action, I am afraid, may give rise to new attacks on the United Nations premises, this time maybe with more nefarious consequences.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Turkey for his statement, and in this connection I would like to recall that this question was raised yesterday during the Presidential consultations by the Coordinator of the Western Group. The Secretary-General of the Conference, in his capacity as Director of the United Nations Office at Geneva, had occasion to explain the situation yesterday, to give an assurance that no effort would be spared in the future to avoid a repetition of this type of highly regrettable incident. Moreover, the Director-General has also informed me that this morning he would be having a meeting with the Chairman of the Diplomatic Committee and with representatives of the host country authorities in order to examine the situation as a whole and to draw all the necessary conclusions from the incident which occurred last Thursday, and to avoid a repetition.

I give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): I have asked for the floor following the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Turkey. The incident referred to by him was indeed a very serious development. It should not have occurred, but since it has, I think appropriate steps should be taken by the United Nations Office in Geneva, as well as the host Government, with a view to preventing such developments in the future. At the same time, I would like also to mention that there are at least a number of missions which can be described as vulnerable due to various situations. It is also to be noted that the grounds in front of the United Nations Office are generally used by demonstrators coming from various parts of the world to hold demonstrations, and on certain occasions we see thousands taking part in such demonstrations. Fortunately, so far, such demonstrations have been peaceful, but now a precedent has been created and there can be situations where other demonstrators, too, could be emboldened by the incident described by the Ambassador of Turkey, and they may, too, try to develop their own tactics with a view to gaining entry into the building, as well as into diplomatic missions in Geneva. It is, therefore, necessary for the United Nations, as well as for the host Government, to look into this matter carefully, and my delegation is pleased to hear that measures are already being taken to discuss this matter. It is the hope of my delegation that the missions will be informed of the measures taken by the authorities concerned after the discussions are completed so that we can rest assured that there will be no repetition of what happened last Thursday.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Sri Lanka for his statement and I think I can assure him that the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva will inform all diplomatic missions of any measures which are decided on. Are there any other delegations which would like to take the floor? I see none.

I would like to inform you that the consultations commenced by my predecessors about the programme of work of the Conference are continuing. I have detected a resolve, which I think is shared by all, not to spare any effort to break the current deadlock. However, I think that we need a little more time in order to define the incipient consensus on the subject. I would therefore like to appeal to all delegations to display a spirit of compromise in order to enable the Conference to embark on its substantive work. Obviously my efforts will also focus on how the Conference can deal with the important question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference.

I give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Madam President, I should first like to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference. My delegation fully trusts in the leadership you will display in this Conference, and we fully share the concerns expressed in your opening statement. I should like to assure you of the full support of my delegation. With regard to the question we have on hand - and, in particular, I am referring to the text which emerged from our last consultations - my delegation would like to know where the real difficulties lie, because this is a text which amounts to a mere procedural decision, a decision to appoint a special coordinator on

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

anti-personnel landmines, an idea which, I have learned, has been around for a couple of months, and we had hoped that today we would be able to have a consensus on this paper. If this is not the case, then I should like to ask, through you, whether it is possible to consider this draft text as adopted ad referendum, which would give an opportunity to those delegations which might not have instructions to come in at a later stage, and permit us to proceed with our work. If this does not rally consensus, then I would like to ask you whether we could meet in an open-ended informal meeting to find out where the difficulties lie, in order to accelerate our work here in line with what you have said in your opening statement and, hopefully, we might be able to go ahead with this matter even before the next plenary. So, please could we find out whether it is possible to accelerate this? Clearly, if we are not able to start with consultations in the month of June, then we will probably lose the whole month of July, because it will be difficult for the coordinator to get the appropriate counterparts for his consultations, and the whole matter would be delayed until at least August or even later. So all that we are asking is to find out whether we can exert more effort and goodwill in order to move ahead on this matter.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I wish to refer to yesterday's Presidential consultations, during which we took stock of the situation on this draft decision. One group said that it needed more time to reach a common position, especially as some members are still awaiting instructions from their capitals. Therefore there was no consensus. The President remains at the disposal of the Conference in order to work in the direction that is desired by its members.

I give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Ms. VUORENPAA (Finland): Madam President, I too would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the CD, and I wish to assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of Finland. I fully support what was just said by the distinguished Ambassador of Germany, and it is the view of the delegation of Finland that this issue is very urgent and that the CD should be able to make a decision on this issue as soon as possible. As you will remember, we came very close to an agreement last week and we would not like to waste what was achieved. We too propose, if there is no objection in this room, that we should continue consultations as soon as possible, preferably today.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Finland for her statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, we wish to associate ourselves both with the words of praise and satisfaction voiced by some delegations with regard to your taking the Chair and with statements concerning your intention to solve our problems at the pace required and to stress in particular that the point made by Germany is a possible way out. I understand from what you said, Madam, that there are still groups that might

(Mr. Berguño, Chile)

have some difficulty in adopting a common position. I think that logic in our consultations should be directed, should move ahead, in the procedural direction that has been suggested, and in the context of that principle it does not seem to me to be appropriate to operate with a group logic but instead, as indicated by the distinguished representative of Germany, we should move forward ad referendum on this and other matters, as soon as possible, and ask those delegations that are still awaiting instructions to indicate what their difficulties are.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Chile for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I would like to call on the Ambassador of Morocco.

Mr. BENJELLOUN-TOUIMI (Morocco) (translated from French): Madam President, allow me to say how happy I am to see you take up the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament. As I have had occasion to tell you, I would have preferred you to be President at a much happier moment in the work of the Conference, but I am sure that your experience and your diplomatic skill will enable you to carry out our work successfully. I wish you every success and you may depend on the cooperation of my delegation. I wish to say that my delegation has no objection to consultations being held. I merely wish to suggest that, in order to improve the climate in this Conference, it would be useful if, while discussing the Ambassador of Australia's proposal, we could also address all the other issues connected with the programme of work of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi for his statement and the kind words he addressed to me. I wish to call on the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. FASEHUN (Nigeria): Madam President, I join previous speakers to congratulate you on assuming the presidency of this very important body. Last week, a proposal was tabled; it was amended; both the proposal and the amendments have been forwarded to our authorities. Yesterday, as recounted by you, during consultations, there was no consensus on the amended text. Again, we have been asked what are the difficulties. We have been asked to hold consultations, to which we are not opposed. But it seems an unusual proposal, as suggested just now, that maybe the groups should be dissolved. I don't know whether the dissolution of the groups should be on this particular issue or perhaps on all issues. That would be quite welcome, of course. It would just allow us to take different positions without the mediating and moderating influence of the groups. We would then see how the CD would be able to do its work. Maybe others have a magic wand to wave away the differences amongst 61 member States of the CD who, in all their rights, are sovereign and who, according to the rules of procedure, should decide one way or the other how the house should move. But coming back to the issue before us, we wish to state that we are still awaiting the instructions of our authorities. And I might add, every new draft will have to be sent back to our headquarters for decision. So we are not opposed to holding consultations. Whatever may be the result of that consultation will be sent to our authorities, and they will take their time to convey instructions to us. Let me emphasize again that

(Mr. Fasehun, Nigeria)

every new draft will be sent back to our headquarters for instructions. So it is reasonable to suggest that the paper of last week will be considered first. Let the various delegations be given time to react to the proposals. As you said, we may be near what you call incipient consensus. I would just say, let us put "incipient" and "consensus" in brackets. We shall not comment on what is called procedural questions. For some countries, though, what is considered procedural is also quite important. But again, to emphasize, every new draft will have to be sent home, and when we get our instructions, these will be passed through our Group Coordinator, or if we have to state it here, it will be stated openly in plenary.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Nigeria for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. On my list of speakers I have the Ambassador of Poland to whom I give the floor.

Mr. DEMBINSKI (Poland) (translated from French): First, Madam President, I would like to congratulate you on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament and to assure you of my delegation's full support in discharging your duties. As regards the problem which is now being discussed here, as co-sponsor of the proposal to appoint a special coordinator on the question of anti-personnel mines, my delegation would like to express its regret that this proposal, which was made more than two months ago, is still being discussed. As has been emphasized here, this is a procedural decision which prejudges nothing, but which would make it possible to move forward in the discussions and the preparations for negotiations in a specific area of very special importance. So in the deadlock we are in at the moment, I would strongly support the proposal made by the Ambassador of Germany a while ago to enable the Conference to move forward or to make some progress in this area; otherwise, there is also the possibility of holding informal consultations after the suspension of the plenary meeting, to enable delegations to speak at greater length on the text which was drafted here last week.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Poland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I would like to give the floor to the Ambassador of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, I extend to you the congratulations of my delegation and assure you of its support. We have listened to your statement today and we are sure that you will guide our work for the benefit of the Conference on Disarmament.

A draft has been submitted to us to enable the Conference on Disarmament to deal with the issue of anti-personnel landmines. We have been told that this is a matter of procedure. I believe that in this case form is substance. My delegation and my Government attach great importance to the total prohibition of anti-personnel landmines. We believe that this is an urgent humanitarian matter. We are participating in and we are providing momentum to the Ottawa Process in order to arrive at a total ban on these indiscriminate

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

weapons before the end of this year. We are not convinced that this Conference is the appropriate forum for discussing this matter, on account of its nature, and on account of the methods of work of the Conference. However, if there were to be consensus, and whenever that consensus is attained, we will not oppose consultations being held on a possible mandate and on the necessary arrangements to see how this Conference on Disarmament could deal with the issue. In the absence of such a consensus, we are not convinced that the Conference should deal with the matter of anti-personnel landmines, either from the substantive point of view or from the procedural point of view. To conclude, allow me to quote paragraph 19 of our rules of procedure, which states: "The work of the Conference shall be conducted in plenary meetings, as well as under any additional arrangements agreed by the Conference, such as informal meetings ...". There is no consensus on holding informal meetings on this matter.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. Now I would like to give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): I apologize for taking the floor again on this subject. It is just to dispel the idea that by waving a magic wand I might have wanted to abolish the regional groups that exist. I think that the Conference benefits from the groups and I think that benefit might be drawn from many more contract groups. What I do not think is appropriate is to interpret the rules of procedure as involving twofold consensus, that we need consensus among the members of the Conference and we need consensus among the groups. Consensus among the groups is consensus among their members, who are all members of the same Conference on Disarmament. I think that major statements have been made here that we should weigh up correctly. I think we should be grateful for all these statements insofar as they demonstrate a degree of flexibility that we urgently need, and I welcome the fact that the idea that there is an emerging consensus has been expressed by the distinguished representatives.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Chile for his statement. Are there other requests for the floor? I see none.

So we have heard several proposals. First of all the proposal to continue consultations on anti-personnel landmines. There is also a proposal to pursue consultations on the entire programme of work. Certain delegations are not opposed to the holding of consultations, but have already warned that any proposal made would have to be referred to their capitals for instructions. Lastly, there are delegations that say they would not oppose a consensus if one were reached for the holding of consultations. So I would like to be able to say that it appears to me that the Conference would wish us to hold informal consultations after the adjournment of the official plenary meeting.

I give the floor to the Ambassador of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, forgive me for interrupting you. Perhaps I didn't express myself correctly and the interpreters were not able to follow me closely. I am not opposed to the holding of informal consultations. Nothing and no one can prevent delegates from consulting one another. I am opposed to the Conference holding informal consultation sessions on a subject which my delegation is not convinced is a matter for this Conference as long as there is no agreement and as long as there is no consensus. We have heard that there are delegations that still have no instructions and could not go along with a consensus. Therefore there is no consensus. Nothing prevents you, Madam, from consulting members informally, but not in the form of informal plenaries.

Sir Michael WESTON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I wonder if there is not some confusion here. I think it is a confusion which is quite natural because of the fact that we, unfortunately, held the informal open-ended consultations last week in this room and it does make us all think that we are, therefore, holding an informal meeting. But I agree with the Ambassador of Mexico: for an informal meeting we do need consensus, but for informal consultations we do not. The arrangement last week was not a meeting. It was an informal consultation which happened to be held in this room. And so I think this is an important distinction because, really, if we are not even able to have consultations of that sort, open-ended consultations without consensus, we really have reached a situation in which the Conference is totally paralysed. But we have not reached that situation. We are able to decide to have open-ended informal consultations and they can, if it is the wish of the President, take place in this room in the way that they took place last week. So I would just make that point.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): After two years of systematic disagreement, it gives me great pleasure to be in total agreement with what Sir Michael Weston has said.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I too am delighted that we are coming to understand each other. Therefore, I would like to adjourn the plenary meeting and, in a quarter of an hour's time, to hold open-ended informal consultations in this room in order to make use of all the facilities available to us.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 5 June at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.